THE LITTLE SCHOOL.

THE school house over which Miss Mattie Smith had reigned for quite a number of years was situated on a hill just beyond the diminutive village of Wales. It was upon the outskirts of a wood and said to be in a snaky place. Miss Mattie, however, had never seen any snakes and didn't believe there were any. She had no objections whatever to the situation, but the house itself was old. Whenever Miss Mattie met a school trustee she was bound to tell him right decidedly that she must have a new school house, one with a cellar for the coal and room for her desk away from the draught.

But in the spring time the draught from the door was very welcome, and Miss Mattie was grateful for all the air she could get as she sat at her desk, hearing the spelling lesson.

"Hero, hero," drawled Miss Mattie's pet, Nan Foster. Then Nan came to a pause and fiddled nervously with the pockets of her apron.

"Well," queried the teacher.

"I know what it means," declared the little girl; "I know so well that I didn't have to look in the dictionary, but I can't say it to save my life."

"It means a boy," volunteered a very small girl, glancing dreamily out of the school room window.

"Oh, yes, of course, I know it means a boy," said Nan, hastily, "a boy who—oh, dear, I can't say it."

Miss Mattie put a sudden end to the difficulty by furnishing the dictionary meaning, whereupon the pupil at the foot of the class murmured grumblingly that that was just what he would have said if he had been given his turn.

After the spelling class had retired the arithmetic class came and established itself in a very long row before Miss Mattie. Down at the end of the arithmetic class was a little Dutch boy with blue eyes and flaxen hair. He was a very new scholar, and he didn't look as if he would remain foot all the time.

The blue eyes were fastened earnestly upon Miss Mattie's face as she put the question: "If an apple is divided into two parts, what are the parts called, Johnny Smeltzer?"

"Halves," answered the little Dutch boy.

"If the halves are divided into two parts what are the parts then called?"

"Quarters," answered the little Dutch boy.

"And if the quarters are divided into two parts what are the parts called?" inquired Miss Mattie, determined to discover what prodigious amount of arithmetic this small boy knew.

"Snits," answered the little Dutch boy without a moment's hesitation.

All morning the school children had been calling Johnny Smeltzer "Tow Head," but when the next recess arrived he was christened "Snits."

It was astonishing, considering the limited dimensions of the village of Wales, that its youthful population should have been of such a critical turn of mind. The children at the little old schoolhouse on the hill laughed openly at tongue tied Ben Windsor, notwithstanding that his father was a school trustee and a person of much importance. They made derogatory remarks in regard to Sarah Wyand's new bonnet and Danny Rider's big shoes and Tommy Gill's poor little hat that his mother had cut out of a piece of blue velvet. They even smiled at Miss Mattie's bronze slippers, and declared in audible whispers that they "must pinch awful." But when Johnny Smeltzer appeared one morning in Ben Windsor's trousers, the uproar was tremendous. The silence bell sounded, but the whole room continued in convulsive giggles, for Ben Windsor's trousers lagged about the little Dutch boy's legs in a manner never intended by any civilized tailor, and for "short pants" they were extraordinarily long and for "long pants" they were, without doubt, "high water."

"Snits must be terrible poor," whispered Jessie Brown, "to have pants give to him."

"He ith pore," returned Ben Windsor, "hith motha ith our wathwoman."

It was upon the following day at noon that the little Dutch boy diffidently approached Miss Mattie's desk.

"What is it?" asked Miss Mattie, keeping on with her writing.

For a silent minute Snits pulled awkwardly at the voluminous trousers, then he blurted out, "My mother can't help it about Ben Windsor's pants. She wish she could."

"Your mother is a very good woman, I am sure," returned Miss Mattie carelessly. "You mustn't mind what the school children say."

Snit's face flushed to the very roots of his white hair. "Oh, I don't mind," he said, with his eyes upon the platform, "'tain't that," and still he lingered.

Now, perhaps, it came to Miss Mattie Smith that this little white-haired Dutch boy considered it her duty to stop the school children's chattering about Ben Windsor's discarded apparel. If so, it was very foolish of him. He hadn't lived long in the village of Wales or he would know better than to expect such a thing of her. Why, she hadn't even attempted to hush that audible whisper directed towards her own high heeled slippers. A faint red came into her cheeks, too, and she inquired a trifle sharply, "Is there anything else you have to say, Johnny Smeltzer?"

The little Dutch boy's head was bowed very low, as he murmured: "Can I run for the prize if I wear Ben Windsor's pants?"

Miss Mattie burst into a ringing laugh; she couldn't help it, it was so exquisitely funny. But even as she laughed, she felt her conscience prick her, for poor little Snits, fumbling and pulling at the baggy trousers, laughed Yes, he minded very, very much, wearing that other boy's trousers.

"I know one thing," remarked the teacher's pet, throwing her proud little head in the air, "If I was Snits I wouldn't come to school if I had to wear people's old pants. His mother ought to go to the store and buy him a pair with her wash money."

"I won't play with him while he wears Ben Windsor's pants," said Charley Stills, virtuously.

"Neither will I," cried George Watts.

"Neither will I," echoed Sammy Linger.

The appearance of Ben Windsor's little sister, hand in hand with a smiling nurse maid, put an end to the uncharitable conversation. Fanny Windsor had cried to come up to the school house, and as she hadn't been very well lately, she was not allowed to cry in vain. Ben was ordered to take good care of his little sister, and the nurse departed, leaving her charge in the midst of an admiring group. Fanny Windsor was fat and dimpled, and did not show any signs of her recent illness except in a certain imperiousness of manner that was extremely amusing.

All the early part of that afternoon in the school room the visitor behaved perfectly. She was only three years old, but she repeated her letters with her eyes off the primer, and she counted up to twenty with creditable rapidity. It was during the fifteen minutes' recess that she grew determined and venturesome. She insisted upon seesawing with one of the large boys, she slapped three of the girls, and in the end was seen marching off alone, crying vehemently that she dared anybody to come with her. When the bell rang Fanny Windsor had disappeared.

If there had been a cellar to the little old school house there would have been a probability, at least, that the trustee's small daughter had wandered into it, or fallen into it, for very likely the cellar would have had no steps.

Miss Mattie and all the pupils, even the three girls who had been slapped, were in a great flutter looking for the missing child. Ben said that she couldn't have gone home, because she was afraid to cross the stream.

It was a faint, far away sounding cry that told them, cellar or no cellar, Fanny Windsor was under the school house. She had crept through a small opening, which, by all means, should have led into the cellar. It was such a very small opening that only a very small boy, who no longer lived in the village, had ever investigated the region from which sounded the forlorn cry. The small boy had seen wonderful things under the school house, lighted very well, he declared, by sunshine shooting through the chinks. He had seen four snakes and a nest of spiders as big as butterflies, and a whole lot of bats. Ben Windsor's little sister must have been seeing the wonders, too, for she began to scream loudly.

"Can't anybody get her out?" cried Miss Mattie, wringing her hands.

Ben put his scared face to the opening and called, "Fanny, Fanny!"

The screams under the house grew louder.

"We'll have to tear up the school house floor to get her," exclaimed Willie Day, excitedly.

"She'll be smothered by that time," said Sammy Linger.

"Fanny, come along this way," pleaded Ben. "Here'th brotha."

"I reckon she's caught," said George Watts.

"Mebbe a snake's got her," suggested a little girl.

Then Ben screamed, "I thee a wat!" Many and many a time the school children had laughed at Ben for calling a rat a "wat," but none of them laughed now.

In all that anxious crowd only one mortal realized that something must be done. The little Dutch boy picked up a stick and the next instant Ben Windsor's trousers went wriggling through the opening.

"Oh, dear," cried Miss Mattie, wringing her hands harder than ever, and Miss Mattie's pet hid her face and wept aloud. There was a terrible scuffle under the old school house. It seemed to last a long time; then there was a strange quiet. Ben Windsor, pale and trembling, had drawn back from the opening.

"Mebbe they's both dead," said Sammy Linger, huskily.

At a safe distance from the opening a boy was stooping, with his hands upon his knees. "Some'n's a-coming," he announced in a fearful whisper.

The something that first showed up at the opening was a round, dimpled tear-stained face, and Ben Windsor caught his little sister in his arms and kissed her wildly. Following after Fanny came Snits. Watching Snits drawing himself through the hole, one understood how very small the hole was. The little Dutch boy's fair face was whiter than usual, almost as white as his hair, and his blue eyes looked quite dark as he got upon his feet and stood bashfully, whirling by the tail that third something, which, had it appeared first, would have caused a scatteration in the crowd. "It skeered her, but it hadn't hurt her yet," he announced, soberly. The third something was a dead rat. Then Miss Mattie's pet, who had unveiled her eyes, cast an eloquent glance into the teacher's face. "Snits is a hero, ain't he, Miss Mattie," she asked?

Miss Mattie nodded her head.

"And I reckon he's paid for them pants a hundred times over!" cried Willie Day, enthusiastically, and again Miss Mattie nodded her head.

Later on it was declared that Snits built the new school house, for if Ben Windsor's father hadn't seen the dead rat with his own eyes, he might never have roared out threateningly: "The old rat hole shan't stand another summer; we'll get a new school house, or we'll have none!"—Louise R. Baker, in the New York Observer.

"IT SKEERED HER."

To Purify the Atmosphere.

New York Sun: Noxious gases arising from imperfect sewage may be destroyed by the free use of copperas water poured down the pipes. Saucers of chloride of the lime put about the bathrooms and under the traps purify the atmosphere of a house.

A Cheeky Little Lamb.

The Rev. Dr. Meredith, a well-known clergyman, tries to cultivate friendly relations with the younger members of his flock. In a recent talk to his Sunday school he urged the children to speak to him whenever they met.

The next day a dirty-faced urchin, smoking a cigarette and having a generally disreputable appearance, accosted him with:

"Hullo, Doctor!"

The clergyman stopped and cordially inquired:

"And who are you, sir?"

"I'm one of your little lambs," replied the boy, affably. "Fine day."

And, tilting his hat on his head, he swaggered off, leaving the worthy divine speechless with amazement.—Pearson's Weekly.

When King Canute ordered the waves to roll back, he thought he was talking to a surf.

In a game of ball among deaf mutes the profanity of fingers is perfectly awful to observe.

A policeman is not necessarily a shepherd because he takes a crook along with him.

Singing for the poor may be regarded as one form of charity bawl.

"Sermons in stones" must be of a hard-shell variety.

The man who wanted "little here below" went into the newspaper business.

The scandals that come from Africa are black indeed.